



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MARCH 2004 AGENDA

SUBJECT

Teaching As A Priority Block Grant Program: Approval of Evaluation in Accordance with *Education Code* Section 44735(h).

☒ Action

☒ Information

☐ Public Hearing

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the draft evaluation of the Teaching As A Priority Block Grant (TAP) program in accordance with *Education Code* Section 44735(h).

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

In November 2000, the State Board approved implementation of the TAP program in accordance with *Education Code* Section 44735(a). The Legislature appropriated funding for the TAP program in only two fiscal years, 2000-01 and 2002-03.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Education Code Section 44735(h) requires the State Board of Education to submit an evaluation of the TAP program to the Legislature by January 1, 2004. Inadvertently, this evaluation was listed internally in the CDE as being due June 30, 2004. The mistake was recently recognized, and the attached draft evaluation has been prepared for consideration and approval at this time. The attached draft presents a limited analysis of the program based on available data. The draft recommends to the Legislature that an in-depth evaluation (taking advantage of field experience with the program in 2000-01 and 2002-03) be pursued prior to appropriating funds for the program's continuation in future years.

FISCAL ANALYSIS (AS APPROPRIATE)

Under the TAP program local allocations totaling more than \$182 million were distributed during two fiscal years, 2000-01 and 2002-03. The attached draft recommends that in-depth evaluation of the program be undertaken prior to continuation. If this recommendation were to be accepted by the Legislature and the Governor, there would be a minor implication for the state General Fund – most likely less than \$100,000, depending upon the complexity of the evaluation design. It is possible that private grant funds could be found for the in-depth evaluation activity, although no specific sources of grant funding have been identified.

ATTACHMENT

[Attachment 1](#): Draft Evaluation: Teaching As A Priority Block Grant Program. (6 Pages)

**Draft Evaluation
Teaching As A Priority Block Grant Program
March 2004**

Program Background

The “Teaching As A Priority Block Grant” (hereinafter “TAP”) program was enacted by Senate Bill 1666 (Chapter 70, Statutes of 2000), an urgency statute that took effect July 5, 2000.¹ SB 1666 was part of a six-bill education reform package sponsored by then-Governor Gray Davis, and it contained a number of provisions related to teacher recruitment and retention. The TAP program is embodied in *Education Code* Section 44735.

The TAP program is intended to attract and retain credentialed teachers (and reduce the number of teachers on emergency permits) in schools that are ranked in deciles 1 through 5 on the Academic Performance Index (API).² The program was based in part upon a legislative finding that:

Low-performing schools with a history of having high teacher turnover and inexperienced staff need more qualified teachers to substantially improve pupil achievement. While no one approach will likely meet the challenge of attracting and retaining individuals into hard-to-staff schools, financial incentives ought to be an important element in any effective strategy.

TAP program funds – when appropriated in the annual Budget Act – are to be allocated on a competitive basis to school districts and may be used at the districts’ discretion for recruitment and retention incentives, including, but not limited to:

- Signing bonuses;
- Improved work conditions;
- Additional compensation;
- Housing subsidies; and
- Pursuit of specialized certification related to the instruction of English learners, i.e., the Certificate of Language Acquisition and Development (CLAD) and the Bilingual Certificate of Language Acquisition and Development (BCLAD).

¹ The TAP program was subsequently amended in substantive ways by Assembly Bill 1499 (Chapter 268, Statutes of 2001) and by Senate Bill 319 (Chapter 668, Statutes of 2002). This evaluation (except as noted) reflects the TAP program in its current form.

² When the TAP program was enacted, these schools were collectively known as “low-performing” schools. Legislation effective January 1, 2004, now identifies these schools as “high-priority” schools. (See Assembly Bill 96, Chapter 91, Statutes of 2003).

Funds are to be allocated on a per-pupil basis, with the per-pupil amount generated by students in schools ranked in API deciles 1, 2, or 3 being one-and-one-half times the per-pupil amount generated by students in schools in API deciles 4 and 5.

The TAP program envisions third-year funding of grants (except in small school districts) only being generated by students in schools that have shown a net decrease in the number of teachers with emergency permits during the preceding two years. However, appropriations for the program have been inconsistent, and this provision has never become operative.

The TAP program is administered by the California Department of Education with the approval of the State Board of Education, and it requires the State Board to submit an evaluation of the program to the Legislature.

Program Summary

Table 1 shows that appropriations were made for the TAP program in only two fiscal years, 2000-01 and 2002-03. In both years, the grant-based nature of the program, combined with the complexity of the amount-per-pupil calculation, precluded the allocation of the full appropriation. Because there were more schools participating in 2002-03 and fewer dollars appropriated, the per-pupil allocations were substantially lower in that year.

Table 1. Summary of Key Data Related to Funding

	2000-01	2002-03
Total Appropriation	118,650,000	88,650,000
Total Allocated	100,814,103	81,745,269
Districts with Participating Schools	278	349
Participating Schools	2,766	3,134
Deciles 1-3	(1,799)	(1,980)
Deciles 4-5	(967)	(1,154)
Students in Participating Schools	2,630,448	2,890,268
Deciles 1-3	(1,779,127)	(1,910,054)
Deciles 4-5	(851,321)	(980,214)
Amount Per-Pupil, Deciles 1-3	44	32
Amount Per-Pupil, Deciles 4-5	29	21

Table 2 shows that the proportion of teachers with credentials significantly improved in the schools participating in the TAP program between 2000-01 and 2002-03. Moreover, in comparison to the statewide average between the two years, the percentage of fully credentialed teachers in TAP-participating schools rose faster, and the percentage of teachers on emergency permits declined more significantly, both trends reflecting the positive changes intended.

Table 2. Summary of Key Data Related to Teacher Credential Status
TAP-Participating Schools in Comparison to Statewide Average

	2000-01		2002-03	
	TAP	State	TAP	State
Percentage with Full Credentials	76.8	85.9	83.1	88.0
Percentage in University Internships	1.0	1.4	2.2	2.0
Percentage in District Internships	1.8	.7	1.0	.8
Percentage in Pre-Internship Programs	2.7	1.7	4.6	3.1
Percentage with Emergency Permits	16.4	11.5	8.6	8.4
Percentage on Waivers	1.3	1.1	.6	.7

Table 3 shows how TAP allocations were expended by participating districts. In both years, expenditures were focused principally on compensation and work conditions. However, in 2002-03, somewhat less emphasis was placed on compensation, and more funding was devoted to work conditions and recruitment activities. In neither year were housing and relocation subsidies a major expenditure category.

Table 3. Percentage Breakdown of TAP Program Expenditures by Districts

	2000-01	2002-03
Recruitment Activities	3.4	10.1
Compensation-Related	48.2	38.5
Signing Bonuses	(23.2)	(14.2)
Retention Bonuses	(9.9)	(12.0)
Transfer Bonuses	(3.4)	(1.2)
Other	(11.7)	(11.1)
Improved Work Conditions	39.8	43.0
Professional Development	(18.2)	(14.7)
Teacher-Selected Materials	(11.3)	(9.1)
Other	(10.3)	(19.2)
Housing/Relocation Subsidies	4.6	2.8
Indirect	3.9	5.2
Other	0.1	0.4

Program Issues

Various issues surfaced during the implementation of the TAP program. These issues clearly had impacts on the program's effectiveness.

- "Improved work conditions" proved somewhat ambiguous. Some applicant districts, for example, even sought to include capital outlay expenditures.
- The timeline was problematic, given that API rankings did not come out until midway through the fiscal year.
- Indirect costs were not specifically excluded by statute and, therefore, consumed about five percent of the allocations in many districts.
- Teacher eligibility was not completely clear. For example, administrative judgments had to be made concerning credential holders who did not have full time classroom assignments, such as resource teachers, counselors, speech therapists, principals, nurses, and psychologists.
- Flexibility was needed in the internal allocation of funds among target schools (particularly schools in deciles 1 through 3) within a district. Rigidly limiting each such school to the funds generated by its students would have made it impossible to offer equitable incentives across a district in some cases.
- Limitations in the CDE state operations budget precluded the onsite review of any participating schools.
- The role of teacher bargaining units was unstated in the statute. In many cases, bargaining units appear to have played a significant role in determining how TAP program grants would be spent. In only one case did a TAP program grant have to be returned by a district for failure to reach agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit regarding expenditure of the funds.
- Recruitment and retention bonuses are inequitable to veteran fully credentialed teachers who are already serving in target schools.

Program Evaluation

Evaluating the TAP program is a daunting task for a number of reasons, among them being:

- Lack of funding for evaluation activities at the state level.
- The principal data that would be used for evaluation purposes are self-reported, unaudited submissions by school districts participating in the program.
- Appropriations for support of the program have been inconsistent.

Notwithstanding these limitations, it appears intuitively clear that the TAP program facilitated the recruitment and retention of more fully credentialed teachers in the target schools (and, thus, worked to reduce the number of teachers with emergency permits and waivers). This is evidenced by the fact that target schools made significant progress in “closing the gap” in the proportion of fully credentialed teachers on their faculties, coming much closer to the statewide average in 2002-03. However, the dollar amount expended per teacher recruited and/or retained under the TAP program was substantial.

In 2002-03, second-year participants in the TAP program were asked to report the number of teachers hired in 2000-01 as a consequence of the program.³ The total reported was approximately 12,700 teachers, or roughly \$7,900 per teacher (based on the \$100.8 million allocated statewide in 2000-01).

Moreover, available data yield no answers to the following key questions that may be of significance in the consideration of whether to fund the TAP program in future years:

- Under the TAP program, do teachers recruited and/or retained in target schools in the short-term (one year) remain in those schools in the mid-term (three to five years) and the long-term (beyond five years)?
- Are the types of activities funded under the TAP program necessary on a continuing basis in view of other factors, such as the ongoing efforts of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to reduce the numbers of emergency credentials and waivers, and the requirement of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for all teachers in Title I schools (and ultimately in all schools) to be highly qualified teachers. The latter, in particular, leverages existing monies in the education system to achieve the principal objective of the TAP program, namely a reduction in the number of teachers with emergency permits and waivers.
- Among the various types of activities funded under the TAP program, which are more efficacious in achieving the program’s principal objective. It may be, for example, that lower-cost interventions were more efficacious, or that lower-cost interventions were largely ineffective. Available data simply provide no basis to draw such conclusions.
- Do the negative effects of unintended consequences (e.g., the inequity of existing fully credentialed teachers in target schools receiving no benefit from the program) outweigh the positive effects? Can the unintended consequences be mitigated without extraordinary additional cost?

³ This report by school districts essentially was a count of teachers receiving benefits from recruitment and retention activities funded by the TAP program. It must be concluded that at least in some cases, the affected teachers would have accepted assignments in target schools even absent the TAP-funded benefits. With respect to individual teachers, districts were not asked to speculate on what would have happened if the TAP program had not been in existence.

Recommendation

There is now a group of teachers, school administrators, and local school board members who have had real experience with the TAP program. Prior to appropriating funds for the program's continuation in future years, it is recommended that funds first be appropriated for an in-depth program evaluation that takes advantage of the base of field experience. The in-depth evaluation should pursue, at a minimum, the key questions outlined above.